

A Study on Health and Safety Policies Adopted by Gokaldas Exports - (JDC) For Women Workers

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Abstract – Indian textile industry is currently estimated to be around US\$ 120 billion and is expected to be reaching US\$230 billion by 2020. It contributes to 4% of total India's GDP. The textile industry in India is catering to very dynamic and fast changing urban as well as global environment. The study examines the level of awareness among the women workers of their health and safety in garment industry. Women workers constitute 80% of the workforce in the garment industry. One has to know the working conditions and how the environment affects the women garment workers, as they are subject to multiple risks in the industry. Further, are they aware about the occupational safety and health rights issue is a pertinent question to be answered. On the other hand, this industry comprises of majority of unorganised workers. Hence this study makes an attempt to understand their health and safety issues, risks and problems faced by the women workers at their workplace, checking awareness about labour laws and their proper implementation within the industry and their level of satisfaction at workplace. For the purpose of research Gokaldas Exports is selected which is a leading exporter of garments catering global clients. The study evaluates different aspects like safety policy, literacy, working conditions, training programmes, hygiene, health insurance, grievance redressal, perceptions of the workers towards safety and health in a quantitative manner and also highlights the few gaps in the expectation levels of the women workers and the measure taken by the company. The study is based on the primary data which was collected via a structured questionnaire and direct interview method. The collected data was analysed with the help of SPSS and one sample test is employed. The study concludes that there is a high level of safety maintained by the company and the company is making efforts to provide best possible working environment.

Keywords: Garment Industry, Health, Safety, Awareness, Risks and Hazards

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INTRODUCTION

India's textile industry is one of the oldest industries over several centuries. Even today, it is one of the largest contributors to India's exports with an approximation of thirteen percent of the total exports. It is classified broadly under two segments namely:

1. Unorganized Sector consisting of handicrafts, sericulture, etc.
2. Organized Sector consisting of spinning, apparel, etc.

The textile industry of India has varied spectrums like hand-spun and hand-woven textiles as well as capital intensive sophisticated mills sector. It is

capable of producing wide variety of products to various segments of the market, both within India and across the world.

The Indian textile industry is currently estimated to be around US\$ 120 billion, and is expected to be reaching US\$230 billion by 2020. This industry contributes four percent to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and fourteen percent to overall Index of Industrial Production (IIP). Textile plays a vital role in the Indian economy with over forty-five million people, the industry being one of the largest sources for employment for generation in the country. The industry accounts fifteen percent of the total exports. The size of the Indian textile

market in 2016 was around US\$137 billion, which is expected to grow to US\$226 billion by 2023.

Below table showing the market size of Indian textile industry



Retrieved from www.ibef.org

Company Profile

Gokaldas Exports is the One Stop Shop for the world's most acclaimed brands. It is the largest manufacturer and exporter of apparels in India with an annual turnover of US\$200 Million. 25,000 people across 23 manufacturing units work to ensure that whatever the global trend, Gokaldas Exports is always in fashion.

Vision of the Company: To be a globally reputed apparel manufacturer, evoking distinctive recognition for Product, Performance, Processes and People.

Mission of the Company: Achieve profitable growth through Innovation, Quality, Consistency and Commitment.

Gokaldas Exports Ltd (GEL) was incorporated in 1979. It is a major player in the readymade garment industry across the globe. Gokaldas Exports Pvt Ltd and Unique Creations (Bangalore) Pvt Ltd was merged with the company with effect from 1st April 2004. The company has also initiated the process of buying the machinery for manufacture of structured suits and the company intends to set up a suit plant in Bangalore very shortly.

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

The term Occupational Safety and Health is commonly referred to as the Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) which includes the safety, health and welfare of the people. The goals of this department include having a health and safety work environment, to protect the co-workers and their family members, the employers and others who might get affected from the work environment.

Definition of Occupational Health

Since 1950, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have shared a common definition of occupational health. It was adopted by the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health at its 1st session in 1950 and revised at its 12th session in 1995. The definition reads:

"The main focus in occupational health is on three different objectives:

- (i) The maintenance and promotion of workers' health and working capacity;
- (ii) The improvement of working environment and work to become conducive to safety and health and
- (iii) Development of work organizations and working cultures in a direction which supports health and safety at work and in doing so also promotes a positive social climate and smooth operation and may enhance productivity of the undertakings.

The concept of working culture is intended in this context to mean a reflection of the essential value systems adopted by the undertaking concerned. Such a culture is reflected in practice in the managerial systems, personnel policy, principles for participation, training policies and quality management of the undertaking."

Health and Safety Programmes

Health and safety programs are important for all the employers, trade unions, workers and other participants of the industry or occupation to have a safe and healthy life at the workplace. A few programmes one can look into for a safety and healthy workplace are:

1. Controlling the workplace hazards at source
2. Maintenance of all records
3. An active committee should be formed to look into the needs of the workers for good health and safety at the workplace.
4. Regular medical check-ups should be conducted for the workers and the management
5. The workers and the management have to be informed about the risks for health and safety in the workplace

Hence it can be said that the workplace should have effective health and safety programmes which can help to reduce the life of the workers by reducing the hazards faced by them at the workplace.

Occupational Health and Safety of the Company

The company proactively adheres to all OH&S requirements to ensure a safe workplace for the employees. The programmes provided in by the company are:

1. Eye care camps.
2. Oral health care drive.
3. Child care facilities and amenities training and awareness drive.
4. HER - an initiative for women health care.
5. Hepatitis-B vaccination for all the employees free of cost.
6. Free distribution of protein supplements.
7. Haemoglobin / Anaemia tests conducted for 9,000 employees.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mohammed Mamun Ur Rashid and Mohammad Ashrafur Rashid (2015):

This article talks about how a strong and healthy environment of employees can be known from health and safety programs and policies of the industry. It is a study where in the industry taken as a sample does not provide all the rules and laws put forth by the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 amended in 2013. The study found out that the organization does not thoroughly examine the machineries for its rusted parts, the washrooms and the environment is not cleaned on a regular basis.

Praveen Kumar M et.al. (2014): This article talks about the promotion of occupational health and safety to workers in textile industries in India. The risks and hazards in textile industries are more when compared to other industries and do not come into legal formalities. The people are not aware of the health and safety in the environment as they are uneducated and the management also doesn't take any steps to promote the health and safety to the workers. The fault tree analysis is used under the study to arrive at the highest risk in the industry. The hazards are mainly physical, chemical, ergonomically and physiological which are caused due to long working hours and improper ventilation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women workers constitute 80% of the workforce in the garment industry. One has to know the working conditions and how the environment affects the women garment workers, as they are subject to multiple risks in the industry. Further, are they aware about the occupational safety and health rights issue is a pertinent question to be answered. Another issue which can be looked on is what type of training and awareness programmes do the factory managers engage for them at the workplace and are the policies on health and safety adhered to, by them. This study makes an attempt to cover these issues.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the implementation of health and safety regulations at the industry as per labour laws.
2. To ascertain the health and safety measures adopted for the workers in the industry.
3. To find out the problems faced with respect to the risks, accidents, cotton dust exposure and fire etc.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This particular study took place from February 2018 to April 2018, for an approximate period of three months. This particular study will deal with how the health and safety policies are adopted in Gokaldas Exports - (JDC) for women workers and also to check the awareness of it among them. The area of the study mainly covered the women workers of Gokaldas Exports - (JDC), Rajajinagar. Sample size of the study is 66 and simple random sampling technique is employed, chi-square test is used to test the hypothesis.

RESULTS

Table No.1 Employees perception towards health and safety measures (One-Sample Statistics)

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
My company have a written health and safety policy	66	4.0500	.12546	.01254
The regular medical check-up is conducted	66	3.6000	.80217	.05898
Latest training help me to do my work efficiently	66	3.0000	.00000 ^a	.00000
The level of safety at workplace is satisfied	66	3.3784	.48630	.03575
As per my knowledge and experience, 'labour laws' are observed within company premises	66	4.6216	.48630	.03575
Satisfaction towards legal policies of your company	66	3.2000	.40109	.02949
Awareness about measures and facilities towards health and safety	66	3.2000	.40109	.02949

a. t cannot be computed because the standard deviation is 0.

Source: Primary Data

Above table shows the mean values of variables, it is clear that company has good safety measures and followed the same in the practice. Employees are having positive perception towards labour laws' are observed within company premises and its practice with a higher mean value and significant at the 5% level of significance (i.e., Mean= 4.6216, $0.000 < 0.05$).

Table No. 2 Employees perception towards health and safety measures (One Sample test)

One-Sample Test					
	Test Value = 0				
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
					Lower Upper
My company have a written health and safety policy	98.294	65	.000	3.22162	3.4811 3.3622
Analytical and feedback system	61.041	65	.000	3.60000	3.4836 3.7164
Ability of identifying users identification	66.522	65	.000	2.37838	2.3078 2.4489
Not required to re-enter personal information again and again	101.294	65	.000	3.62162	3.5511 3.6922
Clear main theme and classified content	74.606	65	.000	2.20000	2.1418 2.2582
Consideration of target customers and contact designs	74.606	65	.000	2.20000	2.1418 2.2582

Source: Primary Data

From the above table clears the employees perception towards safety measures followed by Gokuldas company, t value is significant with the 5% level of significance (i.e., less than 0.05).

FINDINGS

It is found that around 20% of the women workers from the total surveyed lot, are unaware about the written health and safety policy of the company.

It is found that the working conditions in the company are hygienic and the employees are satisfied with it. This helps the company to achieve more efficiency and retentions of the employees. It is also found that the morale of women workers is high. This helps the company to have a competitive advantage in the industry.

It is observed that the working conditions in the company are quite hygienic and majority of the workers are in favour of this.

It is observed that 89% of the women workers undergo regular training programmes related to their work which helps them to work efficiently with confidence.

It is observed that around 18% of women have poor awareness about measures and facilities towards health and safety. It is also interpreted that the awareness of measures and facilities towards health and safety among the women workers is below the mean value. Most of the women possess only a fair and reasonable awareness level about facilities towards health and safety. Hence the role of the company is important in ensuring health and safety to their workers. This shows that the company is not taking much effort to make all women workers aware of their rights.

It is observed that the women workers are satisfied with the working environment of the company. The women workers belong to poor socio economic strata of the society hence providing the best possible environment helps the company as well as the workers.

CONCLUSION

Thus it can be concluded that there is high level of safety at workplace. The practices which the company is following are as per the labour laws thereby creating better working environment at the workplace. The company is completely aware about the socio-economic and demographic background of the women workers and also the barriers which they have to face. The company on the other hand has to deal with the global demands hence achieving a balance between the two is a tough task. The company is making effort to create best possible working environment which has resulted in achieving more efficiency to cater to the dynamic and fast growing global fashion demand.

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